

ST LEO'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL - DEVONPORT

NAG 5: Health and Safety

ANTI BULLYING POLICY

PURPOSE

St. Leo's Catholic School seeks to provide an environment that is safe from all forms of intimidation. The anti-bullying policy aims to provide a comprehensive, universally understood definition of bullying behaviour and to outline strategies for all members of the school community to combat social, emotional, physical and all other forms of intimidation.

The policy is to provide clear expectations and guidelines for acceptable behaviour recognising that bullying can occur and is totally unacceptable. It also provides opportunities for the celebration of personal differences realising that each student in God is unique, having been made in the image of God.

INTRODUCTION

Schools have a moral obligation to reduce bullying and their charter agreement between the school's trustees and the Minister of Education specifically directs the school to "provide a safe physical and emotional environment". National Administration Guideline No. 5

St Leo's School has developed this anti-bullying policy in consultation with its staff and parents, and through extensive external research. The following is our definition of **Bullying**.

Bullying usually has four common features:

- it is deliberate
- it is repeated over a period of time
- it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves
- it is difficult for those who bully to learn new social behaviours

There are three main types of bullying:

- Physical: Hitting, kicking, taking belongings
- Verbal: Name calling, insulting and racist remarks
- Indirect: Spreading nasty stories, excluding from groups

Conflict will include aggressive behaviour which does not meet the criteria for bullying above but which inevitably will be inappropriate in the school environment and must attract an appropriate response from the staff.

Parents need to be informed of the existence of St Leo's School anti bullying policy, and parental support is essential for this policy to work effectively. A copy of this policy will be posted on the school website and steps will be taken annually to promote awareness of the policy.

A "NO BULLYING" CULTURE

At St Leo's Catholic school policies and process have been put in place to promote a culture of mercy values where bullying is not acceptable. This includes the following:

- All teachers will program regular weekly "circle time" into their class teaching plan. During circle time the whole group will discuss good patterns of behaviour and 'how we wish to be treated, how we should treat others etc'. The purpose of circle time is to ensure that as pupils move through the school, they will become very familiar with group discussion and expected standards of behaviour.
- Each classroom will have its own agreed rules displayed on the classroom wall. These rules will be made up and agreed by the pupils at the beginning of each year.
- Weekly staff meetings will discuss and identify potential problems both in the classrooms and in the playground so that the whole staff are aware of potential problem areas and can therefore take a pro-active or preventative approach.
- Duty teachers are aware of the need to monitor the whole playground area at break times and keep a close but unobtrusive eye on those pupils who have been identified at the weekly staff meeting
- School 'Out of Bounds Areas', are known to the pupils and to the duty teachers.

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PRINCIPLES

St Leo's Catholic School treats all complaints of bullying seriously. When considering any issue of bullying or aggressive behaviour, we believe the following principles are relevant and will be adhered to:

- All members of the school community have the responsibility to recognise bullying and to take action when they see it happening.
- Staff should always first listen to the victim(s) and make enquiries as may be necessary to clarify exactly what has happened.
- The victim/student should be assured that they have acted correctly in reporting the bullying.
- The emphasis must be on changing the behaviour of the bullying student(s), while providing support for the student who has been bullied.
- The consequences must be clear and visible. In other words the victim needs to be reassured that some action has been taken.
- The offender must have a clear message that bullying behaviour will not be tolerated
- For this policy to be effective, pupils and parents must be prepared to report incidents as soon as possible after they occur.
- The 'Kia Kaha' programme will be run at all levels of the school on alternate years to reinforce anti-bullying behaviours.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN SHOULD ANY BULLYING OCCUR?

In the event that a formal complaint of bullying is made:

- It should be made in writing and passed to the Principal so that the correct action can be investigated and taken and the victim supported.
- The victim will be treated with empathy while the extent of the bullying is being investigated and, where appropriate, will be given suitable protection from retaliation.
- Where appropriate and possible confidentiality for the victim will be observed.
- Parents of both the victim and the bully should be involved in the process and informed of any actions taken.
- The primary intervention at St Leo's Catholic school when bullying has occurred is the "No Blame Approach" (see Appendix 1)
- Other interventions will also include where appropriate:
 - Involvement of the parents of the pupils
 - Isolation and/or withdrawal of the bully
 - Reflection on Mercy Values/Gospel Values
 - Opportunity for face-to-face apology and commitment to future
 - Managing the status of both the bully and victim within his/her peer group
 - Considering other social consequences e.g. withdrawal of privileges from the bully
- In incidents of severe bullying, stand down, suspension or exclusion may occur.
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- The Principal and class teacher will work in tandem to follow up any complaint of bullying with both the students and their parents. It is important that a staff member (usually the class teacher) checks regularly (initially on a daily basis) with the victim and also with the alleged bully. A written record will be kept of these follow ups.
- At the conclusion of any bullying intervention, the Principal will contact parents of both the victim and the bully to report on the outcome, review the process and establish whether there are any issues moving forward.

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This Policy has been written in conjunction with the Special Character Policy

ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTATION AND PROCEDURES

- Behaviour Management Procedure
- Complaints and Grievances Procedure

LINKED TO:

Nag 5 Health and Safety

- Health and Safety policy

Policy last reviewed: March 2011

Date: _____ Chairperson: _____

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Appendix 1: "No Blame Approach" procedures

| Step | Purpose | Process |
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| 1. Victim interviewed | The victim is reassured that the problem can be solved The main threatening figures, the 'bullies' are identified Those present but not actively involved, the 'neutrals' are identified Those whom the victims finds supportive, or would like to have as friends, are identified | Accept all that is said without questioning its validity Do not concentrate on feelings of victim Reassure victim that the problem can be solved Tell victim that a group of pupils will be asked to make him/her happier in school Elicit the names of 'bullies', 'neutrals' and 'supporters' if they have not already been mentioned Make a written record of the interview |
| 2. Support Group selected | Members of all 3 groups are selected All selected members understand why they have been selected No members feel that they have been pre-judged | Select 6-8 members for the support group including all main bullies and some neutrals and supporters See the group separately from the victim Reassure all members that they are not in trouble. No-one is to be labelled. The group is told that X is unhappy at school and that they have been chosen because they can help – this is what they have in common The term bullying is avoided as it assumes pre-judgement Non-judgemental atmosphere is maintained with the group. Parents of victim are informed of the process |
| 3. Empathy with victim sought | Members of the group develop empathy for the victim | Group is asked if they have ever been unhappy at school Feelings of the victim not relayed to group When members provide examples, say "X must be feeling like that" |
| 4. Reasons sought for victim's unhappiness | The group expresses their view of the problem in a non-judgemental atmosphere, thus owning the problem | Explain that X is unhappy at school and as they know X they probably know better than anyone why he/she is unhappy Seek responses – be non-judgemental. Maintain non-judgemental atmosphere by not allowing the use of names No punitive action can follow this discussion When members provide examples, say "X must be feeling like that" |
| 5. The group makes suggestions | The group makes suggestions as to how X can be helped to be happy at school The group collectively owns the plan | The members are asked to make suggestions No-one is asked to make promises nor are they given jobs The actual suggestions themselves are not significant except insofar they demonstrate commitment to the group goal. In appropriate suggestions and be gently rejected. |
| 6. Responsibility for implementation passed to the group | The group is given responsibility for the implementation of the plan – and its success This is a critical step | The group is thanked for their support. The plan is raised. The members are told that they will report back all they have managed to do in a week's time at the review meeting A time for the review meeting is made |
| 7. Review meetings | The situation is reviewed with the victim The situation is reviewed with the support group Further review meetings are scheduled as necessary | Victim is interviewed separately Members of the support group express how they feel things are with X, and what they have done to help. Members are asked for their contributions Members are asked if they are willing to continue for a second week. A second review is arranged Parents of victim are kept informed of process results Support group members rewarded for involvement |